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EXPLORING THE DYNAMICS BETWEEN CRIME SOLUTION EFFICIENCY AND CONVICTION SUCCESS IN THE CARAGA REGION: A MIXED-METHOD INVESTIGATION

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ABSTRACT
This study examines the dynamics between crime solution efficiency and conviction success in the Caraga Region, focusing on the years 2018 to 2022. It seeks to determine the relationship between the efficiency of crime investigations conducted by police investigators and the success of subsequent prosecutions leading to convictions. Using a mixed-method design, the research combined quantitative data analysis of reported, solved, and filed cases with qualitative interviews from police investigators, prosecutors, and members of the judiciary. The study explored how investigative responsiveness, timeliness, inter-agency coordination, and prosecutorial readiness influence conviction outcomes. Findings revealed that while crime solution efficiency has improved over the past five years, conviction success remains disproportionately low. The major challenges identified include limited forensic capability, delayed case buildup, inadequate coordination between law enforcement and prosecution, and insufficient logistical and training support. Nonetheless, the integration of modern investigative tools, capacity-building programs, and data-driven decision-making contributed to faster case resolution and improved evidence handling. The study concludes that the enhancement of inter-agency collaboration, modernization of investigative procedures, and institutional reforms are essential to bridging the gap between crime solution and conviction success.
KEYWORDS: *Crime Solution Efficiency, Conviction Success, Investigation Process, Inter-Agency Coordination, Caraga Region*

INTRODUCTION
The crime resolution and conviction rates are key indicators of the efficacy and credibility of a country's criminal justice system. Ensuring justice is efficient and equitable within individual societies and economies, and among the global community, remains a core challenge that is front and center for governments everywhere. Even the efficacy with which crimes are solved and those responsible are convicted acts as a deterrent to crime, strengthening faith in the police and judicial institutions. Nonetheless, the gap between rates of crime resolution and success of prosecution remains wide, indicating that procedural inefficiencies or evidentiary failings, or both, may hinder the process of justice from being completed or may fall short of the justice that is sought.

Around the world, the criminal justice system has struggled for years with crime resolution and conviction rates. Research conducted in countries such as the United Kingdom emphasizes the procedural shortcomings and systemic forensic failures—including lack of oversight, loss of evidence, and over-reliance on private providers—and highlights a direct link between evidence handling and conviction outcomes (House of Lords Science and Technology Committee, 2025). In the United States, the systemic flaws in the suspect identification process emphasize how bias in lineup construction and suggestive procedures contribute to wrongful convictions through unreliable eyewitness testimony (Kovera, 2023).

In the Philippine context, crime resolution and conviction rates have been contributing elements of public anxiety and institutional reappraisal. Initiatives such as the Enhanced Justice on Wheels and the e-Court program, designed to speed case resolution, still face challenges, These efforts primarily target the court side of the justice process, leaving the critical frontline stages of investigation and prosecution under-addressed. Overall, the crime solution rate has increased while the conviction rate is disproportionately low in the national statistics, pointing to a broken system in the criminal justice process (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2022). This discrepancy is attributed to procedural delays, inter-agency coordination failures, and difficulties in obtaining and presenting evidence.

In Caraga Region, Philippines, crime solution struggles are clearly apparent, prompting the need for a deeper understanding of the factors that influence investigative and judicial outcomes. This study specifically examines the region to address the gap in the literature regarding the relationship between crime solution

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efficiency and conviction success. It seeks to discern and analyze the underlying factors affecting this relationship in order to formulate key, action-based recommendations that can strengthen the regional justice delivery mechanism.

This research seeks to develop programs that may improve conviction rates, such as strengthening police investigative capacity through continuous training, better logistics, and access to modern forensic tools. While in the prosecution, adopt digital case tracking, automated docket systems, and the utilization of technology for presenting evidence in court. Closer coordination between police and prosecutors, supported by joint training and real-time information sharing, is essential to ensure cases are both well-prepared and trial-ready. These efforts will bridge the gap between crime resolution and conviction, leading to a more effective and credible justice system.

Literature Review

Crime resolution and conviction rates are essential indicators of the effectiveness, credibility, and overall integrity of a country's criminal justice system. Efficient crime-solving and successful prosecution enhance public trust, support social order, and strengthen the deterrent effect of law enforcement. However, many jurisdictions continue to struggle with translating solved cases into successful convictions, reflecting procedural weaknesses and evidentiary shortcomings that disrupt the justice process.

In the Philippines, this gap is evident, particularly in the Caraga Region where persistent challenges in case buildup, evidence handling, and inter-agency coordination continue to undermine justice outcomes. This study examines the relationship between crime solution efficiency and conviction success in Caraga, identifies factors affecting this relationship, and proposes targeted, evidence-based reforms to improve the region's justice delivery system.

Globally, criminal justice systems face persistent challenges in ensuring that crime resolution leads to successful and fair convictions. International studies highlight common problems such as weak inter-agency coordination, procedural lapses, and limited forensic capability. Mushelenga (2021) emphasizes that inadequate collaboration between investigators and prosecutors leads to weak case buildup, while Nicklas-Carter (2019) notes that resource shortages and systemic inefficiencies in the United Kingdom undermine investigative quality and delay court processes. Research in technologically advanced systems, such as the UK's algorithmic tools examined by Zilka et al. (2022), shows that while digital innovations can enhance efficiency, they require strong governance and transparency to ensure reliability. Collectively, these findings underscore that effective investigations, evidence handling, and prosecutorial readiness are critical to achieving credible conviction outcomes.

In developing and transitional countries, these issues are further intensified by limited resources, outdated legal frameworks, and fragmented agency cooperation. Manyonge (2021) and Ishiguzo (2024) demonstrate how insufficient training, weak institutional structures, and inadequate coordination hinder the handling of terrorism and cybercrime cases. Studies such as Ambagtsheer (2021) and Sadiq (2020) similarly reveal that legal ambiguity, corruption, and resource gaps impede successful prosecutions in complex transnational crimes. These global patterns parallel challenges in the Philippine context, where outdated investigative practices, limited forensic capacity, and weak police–prosecutor coordination contribute to low conviction success and highlight the need for systemic reforms.

At the national level, crime resolution and conviction outcomes have been a persistent source of public concern in the Philippines. Programs such as the Enhanced Justice on Wheels and the e-Court system have attempted to reduce delays, yet these initiatives primarily address adjudication processes and do not fully enhance frontline investigative and prosecutorial performance. National data reflect a growing disparity: while the crime solution rate has increased, conviction rates remain disproportionately low (PSA, 2022).

This discrepancy suggests critical weaknesses in evidence gathering, case buildup, and inter-agency coordination. Data from the Philippine National Police (2018–2022) show that despite the high number of "solved" cases, conviction rates for serious offenses—including murder and rape—often fall below 10%, indicating gaps between police operations and actual courtroom success. These failures underscore the need for a comprehensive assessment of the justice chain. Thus, this study addresses national gaps by examining how police investigative training, logistical support, forensic access, and prosecutorial readiness interact to influence conviction outcomes. It also seeks to propose reforms such as improved investigative capacity, digital case tracking, and strengthened police–prosecutor collaboration to bridge the gap between crime resolution and conviction performance.

In the Caraga Region, national challenges are further intensified by local socio-economic and institutional constraints. While the region has shown progress in resolving minor offenses, major crimes—such as homicide, drug-related cases, and sexual offenses—remain difficult to solve and prosecute effectively (Caraga Police Regional Office, 2023). Limited forensic resources, understaffed law enforcement units, and heavy case dockets in local courts contribute to investigative delays and weak case presentation. The region's persistent crime solution–conviction gap demonstrates the need for a localized examination of operational capability, coordination mechanisms, and evidence management systems. By analyzing these factors, this study aims to understand where breakdowns occur within Caraga's justice process and to recommend targeted interventions that enhance crime-solving effectiveness and strengthen conviction

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Theoretical/Conceptual Framework/Paradigm of the Study

The study is anchored on two key criminological theories—Routine Activity Theory and Deterrence Theory—to explain the factors shaping crime solution efficiency and conviction success in the Caraga Region. These theories provide the foundation for understanding how criminal behavior is influenced by law enforcement performance, judicial processes, and the broader functioning of the criminal justice system.

Routine Activity Theory, introduced by Cohen and Felson (1979), states that crime occurs when a motivated offender, a suitable target, and the absence of capable guardians converge. In this study, law enforcers and prosecutors are conceptualized as the primary "capable guardians" responsible for preventing crime, resolving cases, and ensuring that offenders are brought to justice. Their effectiveness in investigation, evidence handling, and prosecution directly influences the system's ability to deter crime and maintain public trust. Deterrence Theory, stemming from classical criminologists Beccaria (1764) and Bentham(1789), explains how the certainty, swiftness, and severity of punishment discourage individuals from committing criminal acts. Within this framework, crime solution efficiency represents the certainty of being caught, while conviction success represents the certainty of being punished. When both processes function effectively, offenders perceive a high likelihood of accountability, strengthening deterrence and reducing criminal incentives.

The conceptual framework integrates these theoretical foundations by examining the relationship between crime solution efficiency (the ability of law enforcement to identify suspects and prepare cases) and conviction success (the capacity of the judiciary to deliver a guilty verdict based on credible evidence). The study also considers procedural delays, evidentiary challenges, and inter-agency coordination as intervening factors that influence both outcomes. This combined approach offers a holistic understanding of how policing and prosecution jointly shape justice performance in the region.

To contextualize the study within the Philippine legal setting, it draws on national frameworks such as Article III, Section 14 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution, which guarantees the right to a speedy disposition of cases. This reinforces the importance of efficient procedures in both investigation and prosecution. The study's paradigm (Figure 1) illustrates how the interplay of crime solution efficiency and conviction success influences deterrence, public safety, and trust in the criminal justice system.

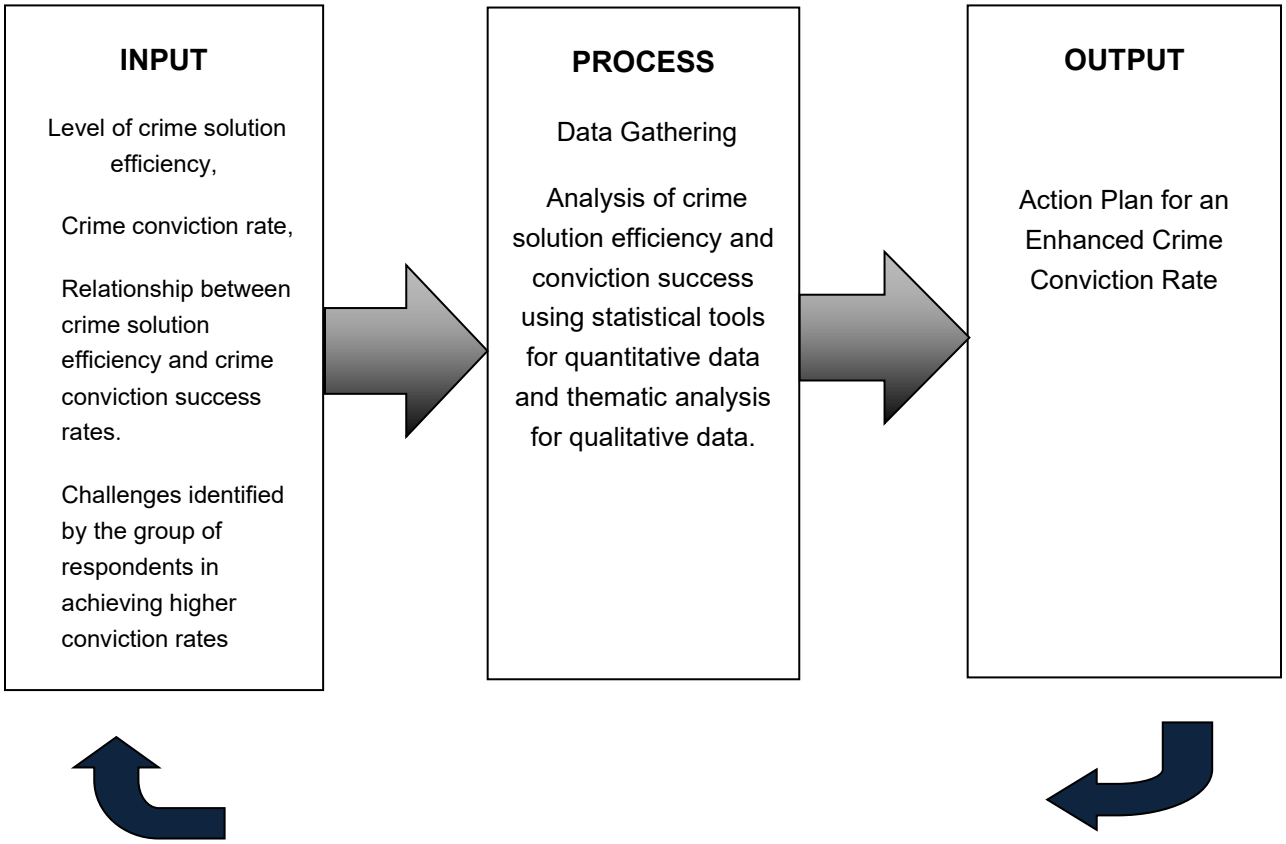


Figure 1. ***Conceptual Framework of the Study***

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Significance of the Study

This study is significant as it identifies the key variables that influence the efficiency of solving crime cases and achieving conviction success in the Caraga Region. By analyzing gaps and mismatches between procedural efficiency and evidentiary requirements, the research aims to strengthen the investigative continuum—from data gathering to case build-up. These insights are expected to enhance coordination among frontline investigators, prosecutors, and other justice sector stakeholders, ultimately improving the overall integrity of the criminal justice process.

The findings may assist law enforcement agencies, court officials, prosecutors, policymakers, and local government units by providing evidence-based guidance for refining investigative procedures, improving documentation and evidence handling, and developing targeted training programs. Through a clearer understanding of procedural challenges and evidentiary constraints, agencies can streamline workflows, minimize case bottlenecks, and ensure that criminal cases are trial-ready. Local governments may also use the results to allocate resources efficiently and implement capacity-building initiatives that respond to community-specific justice needs.

This study contributes to criminological knowledge by offering an empirical foundation for examining the link between crime-solution efficiency and conviction outcomes at the regional level. It supports academic discourse, guides future researchers in exploring data-driven justice reforms, and helps the researcher strengthen analytical and ethical competencies in the field. Ultimately, improved crime-solving and conviction rates benefit communities by enhancing public trust, promoting fairness, and reinforcing the credibility of the justice system in the Caraga Region.

Objective of the Study

1. To determine the actual levels of crime solution efficiency in the Caraga Region from 2018 to 2022 in terms of:
    1.1 Crime clearance rate,
    1.2 Case resolution rate, and
    1.3 Time frame for solving cases.
2. To assess the actual levels of crime conviction rate in the Caraga Region in terms of:
    2.1 Case type;
    2.2 Evidence presented; and
    2.3 Prosecutorial experience.
3. To evaluate the perceived crime solution efficiency in the Caraga Region in terms of:
    3.1 Responsiveness and Timeliness,
    3.2 Investigative Effectiveness, and
    3.3 Community Engagement and Collaboration.
4. To determine whether there a significant difference in the perceived crime solution efficiency in the Caraga Region between and among the groups of respondents.
5. To assess the perceived conviction success in the Caraga Region in terms of:
    5.1 Evidence Presentation and Prosecution,
    5.2 Judicial Process and Fairness,
    5.3 Legal Knowledge and Competence, and
    5.4 Public Perception and Media Coverage.
6. To determine whether there a significant difference in the perceived conviction success in the Caraga Region between and among the groups of respondents.
7. To identify the challenges encountered by the informants in terms of the variables examined in the study.
8. To propose policy or program enhancement based on the results of the study.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study utilized an Explanatory Sequential Mixed Methods Design, as described by Creswell and Plano Clark (2018), to comprehensively examine the dynamic between crime solution efficiency and conviction success in the Caraga Region. The design was appropriate because it provided both a numeric assessment and a contextual understanding of the factors influencing investigative and prosecutorial outcomes. In the first phase, quantitative data were collected and analyzed to determine measurable levels of crime solution efficiency and conviction success, including differences among respondent groups such as the Philippine National Police (PNP), prosecutors, and private complainants. Building on these results, the second phase employed qualitative interviews to further explain, clarify, and expand the quantitative findings, particularly focusing on procedural, institutional, and contextual challenges encountered in the criminal justice process.

This two-phase structure allowed the study to integrate statistical evidence with the lived experiences and perspectives of individuals directly involved in crime investigation and prosecution. Through this integration, the explanatory sequential design strengthened the interpretation of the quantitative results and provided a more holistic understanding of the trade-offs, gaps, and inter-dependencies between solving crimes and securing convictions. Ultimately, the combined approach ensured a deeper and more accurate analysis aligned with the study's objective of improving crime solution efficiency and conviction success in the region.

Research Method

This study employed an Explanatory Sequential Mixed Methods Design to assess crime solution efficiency and conviction success in the Caraga Region. In the quantitative phase, secondary police data and judicial data (2018-2022) were analyzed to measure crime clearance rate, case resolution rate, time frame for solving cases, and conviction rates by case type, evidence presented, and prosecutorial experience. Surveys were also administered to police investigators and private complainants to assess perceived effectiveness in terms of responsiveness, investigative effectiveness, judicial fairness, and public perception. The qualitative phase then involved semi-structured interviews with key informants, specifically selected police investigators,

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prosecutors, and judicial personnel, to explain and contextualize the quantitative results by exploring the challenges affecting investigation and prosecution processes. The integration of both phases provided a clearer and more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing crime resolution and conviction outcomes in the region.

Population of the Study

The study involved participants directly engaged in the Caraga Region's criminal investigation, prosecution, and judicial processes. For the quantitative phase, 620 respondents were included: 254 PNP personnel assigned to the investigation service (41%) and 366 private complainants (59%). Respondents were selected through stratified random sampling across the five provinces of Caraga—Agusan del Norte, Agusan del Sur, Surigao del Norte, Surigao del Sur, and Dinagat Islands. Inclusion criteria required PNP personnel to have at least one year of investigative experience, while private complainants must have directly participated in criminal proceedings from 2018-2022. Recently hired officers, individuals without investigative roles, and complainants with no direct case involvement were excluded. Participation was voluntary, with informed consent secured and confidentiality strictly maintained.

For the qualitative phase, eight (8) key informants were selected through purposive sampling, consisting of 3 certified police investigators, 3 prosecutors, and 2 judicial officers. All had a minimum of five years of relevant experience and were actively involved in case investigation or prosecution within the study period. Retired personnel, those under administrative review, and individuals recently reassigned were excluded. In-depth interviews were conducted to obtain expert insights on evidence handling, case build-up, and judicial processes, complementing the quantitative findings and reflecting systemic strengths and challenges in crime solution and conviction processes.

Data Gathering Tools

The study used two quantitative tools—a structured data checklist for five-year crime and conviction records, and a researcher-developed survey based on the Philippine National Police Field Manual on Investigation of Crimes of Violence and Other Crimes (2011) and the Revised Philippine National Police Operational Procedures (2021). Both instruments underwent expert validation by a police investigator, a prosecutor, and a judicial officer to ensure clarity, accuracy, and alignment with investigative and prosecutorial standards. Their feedback guided revisions that strengthened the instrument's content and construct validity. Following expert review, the survey was pilot-tested with 30 participants. The reliability test using JAMOVI generated a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.995, classified as "Very High Reliability" (>0.90), which far exceeded the study's minimum acceptable threshold of 0.50. This result confirmed that the instrument demonstrated excellent internal consistency and reliably measured variables related to crime solution efficiency and conviction success.

For the qualitative phase, the semi-structured interview guide was likewise validated by the same experts to ensure clarity and relevance. Interviews were conducted with informed consent, and all recordings were transcribed for accurate qualitative analysis. Overall, the use of expert validation, pilot testing, and the very high JAMOVI reliability score established the strong rigor and dependability of all research instruments used in the study.

Data Gathering Procedure

Data gathering for this study followed a three-phase process—preparation, collection, and validation. During the preparation stage, the researcher secured formal permissions from key institutions in the Caraga Region, including the Regional Police Office 13, the Office of the Regional Prosecutor, and selected Regional Trial Courts, to access official records and conduct interviews. Ethical clearance was obtained to ensure adherence to informed consent, confidentiality, and data security protocols. An orientation meeting was also conducted with institutional stakeholders to explain the study's objectives, procedures, and the expected roles of the participating respondents.

In the data collection phase, quantitative data were gathered through a structured survey questionnaire distributed to respondents across the Caraga Region. These respondents included PNP investigators, police station chiefs, prosecutors, and private complainants who were involved in criminal cases within the 2018-2022 reference period. The questionnaire focused on crime clearance rates, resolution timelines, evidence sufficiency, and conviction outcomes. Additional quantitative data were obtained from official institutional documents, including police crime solution reports, prosecutorial case files, and judicial conviction records. A data extraction checklist was used to ensure systematic and complete retrieval of the required variables. Simultaneously, qualitative data were collected through semi-structured key informant interviews with police investigators, chiefs of investigation, state prosecutors, trial court judges or clerks of court, and selected private complainants or victims. Interviews were conducted either in person or online depending on participant availability and were audio-recorded with their consent.

The final stage involved data validation and organization. Quantitative data were cross-checked with the assistance of institutional records personnel to identify and correct inconsistencies, while qualitative interview transcripts were transcribed and returned to participants for verification to ensure accuracy. Triangulation was then employed to merge the quantitative and qualitative datasets, allowing the researcher to identify convergent patterns, validate findings, and generate deeper insights. This systematic approach ensured that the data collected were accurate, comprehensive, and aligned with the study's goal of examining the relationship between crime solution efficiency and conviction success in the Caraga Region.

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Treatment of Data

Quantitative data—such as crime clearance rates, case duration, and conviction outcomes—were organized in spreadsheets, cleaned for errors, and analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, and mean). Inferential tests, particularly the t-test, were applied to determine significant differences among variables, with all statistical procedures conducted using SPSS or similar software.

Qualitative interview data were transcribed verbatim, organized through NVivo, and examined using thematic analysis. Coding and theme development allowed the researcher to identify recurring patterns related to procedural, institutional, and contextual influences on conviction outcomes.

To integrate the findings, a triangulation approach was employed, comparing quantitative results with qualitative insights to identify areas of convergence and divergence. This synthesis provided a comprehensive understanding of how crime solution levels relate to conviction success, informing action to strengthen the criminal justice system in the Caraga Region.

Ethical Considerations

The study followed established ethical standards for criminological and social research to ensure integrity, accountability, and respect for participants' rights. Informed consent was obtained from all respondents—including law enforcement officers, prosecutors, and judicial personnel—who were informed of the study's purpose, procedures, risks, benefits, and their right to withdraw at any time. Personal information was anonymized, securely stored, and accessed only for research purposes in compliance with general data privacy and research ethics guidelines. Institutional permissions were secured to access police records and judicial reports, and all procedures complied with national ethical requirements. Ethics clearance from a recognized review board was obtained before data collection.

Participation in both the survey and interviews was strictly voluntary. The researcher ensured that no respondent was coerced, pressured, or influenced through authority or incentives, and that individuals who declined participation were fully respected. Additional care was observed when dealing with potentially vulnerable groups to ensure genuine and informed consent. Throughout the process, the researcher ensured that the study did not disrupt institutional operations or burden participants, upholding the ethical principles of minimizing harm, ensuring voluntary participation, and conducting responsible and transparent research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Perceived Crime Solution Efficiency in the Caraga Region

The perceived crime solution efficiency in the Caraga Region was assessed across three dimensions—Responsiveness and Timeliness, Investigative Effectiveness, and Community Engagement and Collaboration. Across all indicators, a clear pattern emerged: PNP personnel consistently rated their performance very highly ("Strongly Agree"), while private complainants rated much lower (from "Disagree" to "Agree"), revealing a persistent perceptual divide.

Table 9 shows an overall mean of 3.43 (Agree), with PNP personnel reporting Strongly Agree (M = 3.58) and complainants reporting Disagree (M = 2.47). While officers believe responses and initial investigations are prompt, complainants highlight delays in filing complaints (M = 2.39), difficulty accessing services (M = 2.46), and minimal case updates (M = 2.15). This gap suggests issues not only in operational speed but also in communication and transparency. Qualitative data confirm delays caused by slow forensic turnover, coordination challenges, and logistical constraints. These align with literature noting that procedural bottlenecks and weak feedback mechanisms reduce public trust in police responsiveness.

Responsiveness and Timeliness

Table 9.

Crime Solution Efficiency and Conviction Success in the Caraga Region in terms of Responsiveness and Timeliness

INDICATORS	PNP personnel		Private Complainants		Overall	
	F	P	F	P	M	VI
The police respond to crime reports in a timely manner	3.60	SA	2.66	A	**3.47**	**A**
The initial investigation of crimes is conducted promptly	3.64	SA	2.71	A	**3.52**	**SA**
The police provide regular updates to victims regarding the status of their cases.	3.53	SA	2.15	D	**3.35**	**A**
The time taken to process crime scene evidence is reasonable	3.62	SA	2.56	A	**3.48**	**A**

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The police are easily accessible to report crimes.	3.63	SA	2.46	D	**3.48**	**A**
Filing of complaints or affidavits is facilitated within the same day of reporting.	3.45	A	2.39	D	**3.30**	**A**
Criminal cases are endorsed to the prosecution office without unnecessary delay.	3.59	SA	2.37	D	**3.42**	**A**
Overall	**3.58**	**SA**	**2.47**	**D**	**3.43**	**A**

Legend: M= Mean VI= Verbal Interpretation
3.50 – 4.00= Strongly Agree (SA) 2.50 – 3.49 = Agree (A)
1.50 – 2.49 = Disagree (D) 1.00 – 1.49 = Strongly Disagree (SD)

Table 10 shows an overall mean of 3.48 (Agree). PNP officers rated investigative effectiveness very high (M = 3.61), but complainants rated much lower (M = 2.58). Higher scores were seen in the conduct of investigations and perceived sufficiency of evidence, while lower ratings were linked to technology use and evidence preservation. Qualitative accounts reveal gaps in training, digital forensics capability, and early police–prosecutor coordination, with officers acknowledging limited expertise and resources. These findings indicate that internal confidence in investigative work does not translate to public assurance, contributing to a perception of limited case visibility and investigative rigor.

Investigative Effectiveness

Table 10.
Crime Solution Efficiency and Conviction Success in the Caraga Region in terms of Investigative Effectiveness

INDICATORS	PNP personnel		Private Complainants		Overall	
	F	**P**	**F**	**P**	**M**	**VI**
The police conduct thorough and comprehensive investigations	3.63	SA	2.63	A	**3.50**	**SA**
The police effectively utilize available resources and technology in investigations	3.58	SA	2.56	A	**3.44**	**A**
The police gather and preserve evidence effectively	3.61	SA	2.54	A	**3.47**	**A**
The police demonstrate competence in crime scene investigation	3.58	SA	2.56	A	**3.45**	**A**
The police effectively follow up on leads and gather witness testimonies.	3.61	SA	2.63	A	**3.48**	**A**
Criminal investigations are supported by sufficient and accurate evidence.	3.64	SA	2.61	A	**3.50**	**SA**
Investigation reports are comprehensive, well-documented, and based on facts.	3.63	SA	2.56	A	**3.49**	**A**
Overall	**3.61**	**SA**	**2.58**	**A**	**3.48**	**A**

Legend: M= Mean VI= Verbal Interpretation
3.50 – 4.00= Strongly Agree (SA) 2.50 – 3.49 = Agree (A)
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Community Engagement and Collaboration

Table 11.

Crime Solution Efficiency and Conviction Success in the Caraga Region in terms of Community Engagement and Collaboration

INDICATORS	PNP personnel		Private Complainants		Overall	
	F	P	F	P	M	VI
The police actively engage with the community to prevent and solve crimes.	3.68	SA	2.61	A	**3.53**	**SA**
The police collaborate effectively with other law enforcement agencies.	3.67	SA	2.63	A	**3.53**	**SA**
The police foster a sense of trust and cooperation with the community.	3.63	SA	2.59	A	**3.49**	**A**
Community members are encouraged to provide information to the police	3.67	SA	2.61	A	**3.53**	**SA**
The police are receptive to community concerns and feedback	3.62	SA	2.61	A	**3.49**	**A**
The police conduct regular consultations or dialogues with the local community.	3.62	SA	2.54	A	**3.47**	**A**
There is a strong partnership between schools, religious groups, and police in addressing youth-related crimes.	3.64	SA	2.51	A	**3.49**	**A**
Overall	**3.65**	**SA**	**2.59**	**A**	**3.50**	**SA**

Legend: M= Mean VI= Verbal Interpretation
3.50 – 4.00= Strongly Agree (SA) 2.50 – 3.49 = Agree (A)
1.50 – 2.49 = Disagree (D) 1.00 – 1.49 = Strongly Disagree (SD)

Table 11 shows an overall mean of 3.50 (SA), with PNP personnel scoring Strongly Agree (M = 3.65) and complainants scoring only moderately (M = 2.59). While the PNP asserts active community engagement and inter-agency collaboration, complainants report only moderate trust-building, limited feedback opportunities, and minimal involvement in community safety programs. This suggests that engagement efforts exist but are not sufficiently visible, accessible, or sustained to the public.

Overall Synthesis

Across all three domains, the consistent perception gap indicates that while the PNP views its performance as strong, complainants experience limited access, insufficient updates, and minimal involvement in policing processes. Quantitative results highlight internal confidence, whereas qualitative insights expose structural constraints—slow forensic processes, limited training, bureaucratic delays, and weak communication channels. Ultimately, crime solution efficiency in Caraga is shaped not only by operational performance but by the public's experience of transparency, responsiveness, and participation. Strengthening communication systems, community engagement platforms, and inter-agency coordination is essential to bridging this trust gap and improving overall crime solution outcomes.

The Challenges Encountered by the Respondents in Terms of the Variables: Evidence Presentation and Prosecution, Judicial Process and Fairness, Legal Knowledge and Competence, and Public Perception and Media Coverage

Conviction success in the Caraga Region is hindered by a convergence of interconnected challenges that cut across evidence presentation, judicial processes, legal competence, and the influence of public perception and media coverage. The findings reveal that weaknesses in evidence handling and prosecution serve as one of the most critical barriers to securing convictions. Prosecutors and judges frequently encounter incomplete, poorly documented, or inconsistently presented evidence, which diminishes the strength of criminal cases. Investigators often fail to provide supplemental evidence when required, and complainants sometimes withdraw or lose interest, leading to the collapse of cases. Testimonies from investigators and witnesses tend to be inconsistent or poorly articulated, making them vulnerable during cross-examination and preventing the prosecution from meeting the standard of proof beyond reasonable doubt. These recurring difficulties show that evidence, even when initially gathered, often does not translate into courtroom strength due to documentation issues, preparation gaps, and the absence of coordinated case-building practices.

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The judicial process itself presents further complications that undermine fairness and weaken conviction outcomes. Courts in the region struggle with congested dockets, prolonged intervals between hearings, and frequent postponements caused by absent witnesses or transferred investigators. These procedural delays often result in "trial fatigue," decreased witness reliability, or the eventual withdrawal of complainants. When material witnesses do not appear, cases are archived or dismissed altogether. Procedural lapses, particularly in maintaining the integrity and chain of custody of evidence, allow the defense to challenge admissibility, leading to acquittals even in cases with strong initial leads. Social and familial pressures further compromise the judicial process by encouraging victims to seek out-of-court settlements, weakening accountability, and undermining public perceptions of justice. Compounding these structural delays are significant gaps in legal knowledge and professional competence among investigators and prosecutors. Many fiscal offices are understaffed, forcing prosecutors to manage excessive caseloads and devote time to administrative responsibilities rather than thorough case review. Poorly prepared case folders, incomplete documentation, and weak coordination between police and prosecution limit the ability to build strong cases. Investigators often enter court without adequate preparation, lacking training in testimony, cross-examination, legal terminology, and courtroom decorum. Burnout and resource shortages push experienced investigators to transfer or retire early, leaving sensitive cases in the hands of inexperienced personnel with minimal training. These conditions create a recurring cycle in which courtroom performance falters, documentation remains weak, and public confidence diminishes.

The pressures exerted by public perception and media coverage further complicate the justice process. Prosecutors describe emotional strain and burnout when dealing with high-profile cases, where the media and public demand rapid results. This pressure sometimes forces legal actors to file cases before evidence is fully complete, resulting in weak prosecutions that falter during trial. Sensationalized or biased media reports shape public opinion prematurely, giving the impression that guilt or innocence has been predetermined even before proceedings begin. Investigators likewise report being pushed to rush their work or adjust investigative strategies to satisfy public expectations, often resulting in procedural errors. Political interference, revealed in accounts of investigations being expedited or delayed to favor influential individuals, adds another layer of distortion that undermines impartiality and weakens case credibility. Together, these forces create an environment in which justice actors struggle to maintain objectivity and adhere to best practices in the face of intense external scrutiny.

Overall, the challenges encountered across these variables illustrate a justice system constrained by fragile evidence, delayed court processes, competency gaps, and external pressures that shape decision-making. These issues do not operate in isolation; instead, they reinforce one another, creating a cycle that weakens criminal cases from investigation to final judgment. The combined effects of these systemic deficiencies reduce the region's ability to secure credible and consistent convictions and highlight the urgent need for institutional strengthening, improved coordination, and reforms that prioritize timeliness, competence, and fairness in justice delivery.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concluded that crime solution efficiency in the Caraga Region varied markedly across the eight major offenses examined. High-volume property crimes such as theft, robbery, and physical injuries showed higher clearance and resolution rates, typically completed within six to nine months. In contrast, serious violent crimes such as murder and rape had significantly lower clearance rates and required up to twelve to twenty-four months due to complex investigations, limited forensic resources, and procedural challenges. These patterns were similarly reflected in crime clearance, case resolution timelines, and conviction outcomes. Conviction success was found to depend largely on the nature of the offense, availability of witnesses, quality of evidence, and prosecutorial experience. Minor offenses generally achieved higher conviction rates because they were often supported by strong and consistent testimonial evidence, even in the absence of extensive forensic documentation—reflecting the region's limited forensic capability. In contrast, serious crimes requiring advanced forensic investigation showed lower conviction success due to evidentiary gaps and insufficient technical support. Stakeholder perceptions revealed notable differences: law enforcement personnel viewed their responsiveness and investigative efforts more favorably, whereas private complainants expressed concerns about delays, insufficient coordination, and uneven access to justice. Perceived conviction success similarly varied, with respondents recognizing the importance of evidence quality and legal expertise but identifying delays, backlogs, and sensationalized media coverage as factors that weakened due process. Respondents highlighted persistent systemic challenges, including inadequate forensic capability, inconsistent inter-agency coordination, under reporting due to distrust, insufficient witness cooperation, and heavy prosecutorial workloads, all of which limited the region's ability to resolve crimes efficiently and secure convictions.

These findings underscore the urgent need for comprehensive reforms to strengthen the criminal justice system in the Caraga Region. Law enforcement agencies must upgrade their investigative capability by enhancing basic forensic procedures, integrating modern investigative technologies, and creating specialized teams for complex or sensitive cases. Strengthening early and sustained coordination between investigators and prosecutors—through joint case conferences, evidence validation meetings, and real-time communication—will improve case buildup and ensure that evidence presented in court is complete, admissible, and prosecution-ready. On the prosecutorial side, continuous professional development in courtroom litigation skills, evidence management, and case handling is essential, along with the adoption of streamlined case management systems to minimize processing delays. The judiciary should improve

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docket control, rationalize hearing schedules, and ensure that courts have the necessary human and logistical resources to expedite trial proceedings. These efforts must be supported by an integrated, inter-agency case-tracking system that links police, prosecution, and courts to prevent information gaps and enhance procedural consistency. Stakeholders must provide stable funding for forensic improvement, investigator and prosecutor training, and justice-sector digitalization, while encouraging transparency through regular reporting of performance indicators. Clear media protocols and accurate public communication are likewise crucial to prevent misinformation that could compromise judicial integrity. Taken together, these coordinated reforms across investigation, prosecution, adjudication, and policy support are vital to improving crime solution efficiency, accelerating case disposition, and increasing conviction success in the Caraga Region.

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